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SOME REVELATIONS OF THE WAR.

BY ANGLO-AMERICAN.

WAR is always revealing. In itself the highest manifestation of a nation's spiritual and physical unity, clarifying the mind, exalting the heart and precipitating into visible coherence and substance the ideals and policies and aspirations of the Powers actually engaged in it, its influence over those who merely stand on its fringe and pretend to no more than a subsidiary interest in its fortunes, is hardly less masterful and condensing. Beneath its awful shock the cobwebs of tradition, vagueness and indecision are scattered, realities are unveiled and fundamentals made manifest. A hundred conflicts might be quoted that have emitted this illuminating flash, but it will suffice to mention two. The Spanish-American war revealed Europe to the United States, the United States to Europe, and the destiny of America to the Americans themselves. The Boer war revealed the British Empire to Great Britain, and laid bare at a stroke and in all its momentous fulness a profound political antagonism between British and German aspirations. Not less evident, and perhaps of even weightier significance, are the discoveries which have burst from the flames of this Far Eastern conflict. Affecting the United States primarily, their reflex action and the issue that cannot but flow from them must ultimately, I conceive, connect with the whole world of international politics. Briefly, those discoveries amount to this. In the first place, there is an end of the "traditional" friendship between the United States and Russia. In the second place, Americans realize, as they have never realized before, how vast is their stake in the future of China, and how impossible it is for the United States to hold aloof from the strife of policies and interests that centres in the Far East.

One of the first things that an inquirer notices about the United

States is the contrast, so great as to be quite extraordinary, between the intelligence of the people and their susceptibility to "crazes." The sum total of American intelligence is undoubtedly immense. I am speaking, of course, rather of quantity than quality; in sheer bulk the mass of American "mentality" far outweighs that of any other country. Nowhere else have so many people been raised to the level of what is known as "middle-class opinion"; the average which few rise above or fall below is of a high standard and remarkably sustained. And yet, in spite of this, it is safe to say that no nation gets so constantly swept away by movements opposed to all human experience or contradicted by ordinary facts of economics. There is no country in Europe where such a fundamental fallacy as Bryanism, for instance, could have made the headway it made in the United States. Several reasons might be given to account for this. The most important of them are to be found in the changes that have come over American politics since the Civil War; more specifically in the great and growing power of the "machine," and the sway of the Boss, and the consequent decline in leadership of the Clay and Webster type. Argument and instruction, as weapons of political persuasion, always tend to fall into disuse in a country where "machines" accumulate and men decay. Electioneering and the mere mechanism of politics, party tactics and the ballot-box point of view, acquire in such a country an ascendancy positively injurious to the political education of the people. This will perhaps be made clearer if we compare the English and American systems. In England, almost since the time of Burke, it has been the custom to require of an M. P. at least one address to his constituents a year. These meetings are the saving clause of the English democracy. They are held at a time when electioneering is in abeyance, and nothing worse than a merely human partisanship is expected of the speaker. An M. P. who has no immediate need to worry about his seat may condescend to an impartiality which a candidate can hardly afford. He has no personal points to score, no opponent more formidable than a stray heckler to meet, and no stress is put upon him to enforce more than the reasonable party view. And even that he need not press too eagerly, for the average Englishman dislikes political zealots. The speeches made on such occasions are as a rule far more temperate and informing than those which the same speaker delivers during

a campaign or from the floor of the House. Again, these meetings help to concentrate attention on the work of administration and the broader aspects of policy. This is to perform a most important service, for democracies everywhere are too apt to think that they have solved the problems of government when they elect one set of candidates to office in preference to another set. Too much thought is given to who is to do the work and too little to how it is being done. The constant appearance of members of Parliament on public platforms serves to put elections in their proper place. They keep the public informed on the rights and wrongs of public questions, not spasmodically or for the purposes of a single election, but regularly and continuously. I doubt whether democracy has ever justified itself more emphatically than in England during the past months of the fiscal discussion.

Before the Civil War and before the organization of politics reached its present comprehensiveness, this used also to be a characteristic of American public life. That it is so no longer will scarcely, I think, be disputed, in spite of Mr. Roosevelt's attempts to make the Presidential office a sort of provisional Judgment Seat on all things human and divine. Bossism and the dominion of the caucus are incompatible with the light and leading of the older school of statesmen. Moreover, the American theory that one's next-door neighbor is only a little less qualified than oneself to run the United States does not tend to make Congress an intellectually inspiring body. The habit of regarding representatives in the light of pledged delegates, bound to carry out the mandates of their constituents, and of leaving as little as may be to their discretion and individual judgment, likewise helps to dam the flow of instruction from its natural fountain-head. Again, compared with the devouring interest that is concentrated on the House of Commons, the people of the United States are indifferent to Congress. Congressional debates are not usually reported in the daily papers at any serviceable length, and consequently have practically little influence on public opinion. The very idea of looking to Congress for real guidance in public affairs is disappearing, if it has not already disappeared. Very few Congressmen or Senators dream of visiting their constituents, except at election time, for the purpose of addressing a meeting on political topics. The result is, that the national legislature, as a factor in the political education of the country, may be almost

ruled out. There remain the Press and the annual "Messages" of the President and State Governors. The latter, thanks to their unconscionable length, are for the most part "taken as read" by the average citizen. That, at any rate, is not the fate of the Press, but the political influence of the American Press is a most uncertain quantity—so much so that at times one doubts whether the Press has any such influence at all. And, after all, the most impressive, and in the long run the most adequate, way of educating the democracy is not by writing but by speaking. Instruction by word of mouth is always more lasting and effectual than instruction doled out in print. That is why "correspondence colleges" are such poor things. A nation, indeed, that rarely resorts to the platform except at moments of supreme excitement when reason is at a discount, dooms itself to political incompleteness, if not to political ignorance. Except when his vote is wanted, the average American is too rarely appealed to for an opinion, and any conclusions he may come to on matters of national policy have, therefore, the disadvantage of not being submitted to the touchstone of a ripper and more experienced judgment. While, therefore, one may say that the operative force of English politics is middle-class opinion revised and corrected by the best or nearly the best intelligence of the country, that of American politics is middle-class opinion left pretty much to its own devices.

This is a shortcoming which the intellectual uniformity of America is liable to aggravate into a defect. An idea once implanted in the average man sweeps over the entire continent with a speed and completeness that no other nation can even begin to parallel. It is, therefore, doubly desirable that the idea should be a sound one and not the mere outcome of caprice, unreasoning emotion or half-baked knowledge. And what is desirable in the domestic politics of the United States becomes almost imperative in its foreign affairs—first, because their immense complexity makes a firm grip of fundamentals essential to the prosecution of a stable policy; secondly, because the average American, having hitherto treated them as a mere parergon, to be studied cursorily, if at all, is more than usually liable to form judgments that have little relation to the facts; and thirdly, because public opinion in the United States determines, with a minuteness unknown elsewhere, the lines on which the foreign policy of the nation is to run. I know of no greater American need at this mo-

ment than a course of systematic instruction in the elements of international politics, and the need is all the more insistent because of the peculiar difficulties in the way of meeting it. There is no country in which a political prejudice lives longer than in the United States. Americans have good memories; they live intensely in the stirring events of their brief and brilliant past; and the impressions left by those events crystallize into traditions with a facility absolutely unique. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that, before the conflict with Spain, the idea of revising in the light of present-day realities the "traditions" bequeathed by the Revolution and the Civil War, would have been regarded by most Americans as almost sacrilegious. The international results of the Spanish War created from Maine to California a surprise so ingenuous as to be positively laughable. Then for the first time did it dawn on Americans that it might not be the height of wisdom always to judge the present by the past, to assume that the England of the "Alabama" days must necessarily be the England of 1898. In a flash, England fell from her time-honored position as the appointed foe of the United States; and, in a flash, her place was forced upon Germany. Germany was now installed as "the enemy." The next war, it was settled, would be with Germany. Much of the Teutophobia was exaggerated; a good deal of it was irrational and could draw no warrant for its vehemence from a calm survey of either German or American policy. Nevertheless, it was a sign of advance and a symptom of enlightenment. If it showed that the unhingement of the public mind produced by the revelations of the Spanish War had not yet adjusted itself, it also showed that the view of England as the sole and predestined "enemy" had at last been outgrown.

But there remained one stronghold of "tradition" still to be captured. The Spanish War had indeed battered a breach into it. Inspired Russian journals had discussed a European coalition against "the presumptuous Yankees," had pointed with bewildering tactlessness to the unfortified state of the Pacific coast, had received the American acquisition of the Philippines with a growl of intense and prophetic displeasure; and these things Americans had made a note of. But, in effect, the towering citadel of "Russo-American friendship" still flew its old deceptive flag. It needed the tangible experience of actual participation in *Welt-politik*, a year or two of focussed attention on the realities of Rus-

sian policy in the Far East and at home and on the unchanging characteristics of Russian diplomacy, before Americans could clear their minds of all illusions. And now enlightenment has come. Rising, year by year, in progressive volume, it has now poured like a flood over the national consciousness, sweeping away the phantoms and hallucinations of the past. The belief that Russia and the United States were natural affinities had its central root, so far as I could ever discover, in the legend that Russia was prepared to resist any intervention by France or England on behalf of the Confederate States. The legend itself sprang from the fact that in 1863 half a dozen wooden vessels belonging to the Russian fleet did actually drop anchor in New York Harbor. Not a single line can be found in the Washington archives to connect the arrival of those vessels with the crisis through which America was passing. It is an assumption absolutely unsubstantiated by any evidence in the possession of the administration. So far as I know, the only reference, if reference it be, to any understanding between the Russian and American Governments at that time is to be found in a private letter written by Mr. Seward—a mere hint, abundantly qualified, of vague possibilities that might happen “sooner or later.” But the matter may easily be brought to a decisive test. We have been assured that the commander of the Russian squadron had “sealed orders.” A copy of those orders must surely exist. Let the Russian Government produce them—if it dares. It will not dare because from first to last the whole tale is a pure fabrication.

And yet for a whole generation the legend has held sway, gaining new power and confidence by the mere magic of repetition. For a whole generation Americans have felt themselves under an obligation to Russia, predisposed to receive Russian proposals with sympathy, and sentimentally interested in the movements of Russian policy. The positive results of this partiality have been inconsiderable because until now Russian and American interests have lain too far apart for the operation of practical friendship or practical antagonism; but its indirect results have been greater than most Americans can realize even now. The adroitness of successive Russian Ambassadors at Washington in keeping England and America apart, in perpetuating and fomenting the unnatural divisions that used to separate the two Powers that have more in common than any other two Powers on this

earth, in fostering the bitterness of the Irish-American element, and in constantly emphasizing through the Press the peculiar bonds of gratitude that linked the United States to Russia, has from the Russian point of view been admirable. There has not for years been a single question at issue between England and America, the settlement of which Russian diplomacy has not tried to thwart. If any one doubts that the supreme object of Russian diplomacy in Washington has been the maintenance of Anglo-American suspiciousness and distrust, let him turn to the article contributed to this REVIEW about five years ago by Vladimir Holmstrem and Prince Oukhtomsky ("*Ex Oriente Lux*," July, 1899). In it he will find an almost embarrassingly frank avowal of Russia's determination to rescue the United States from "British tutelage," and an appeal to Heaven to "preserve America from the curse of Western Imperialism into which England is now tempting her." That has always been the Russian goal. To keep America at odds with England and away from the Far East is the end to which a long line of Ministers and Ambassadors have devoted their shrewdest and most pertinacious efforts; and in prosecuting it their strongest weapon has been the "traditional friendship" uniting Russia and the United States. But that, while the supreme, was by no means the sole, object of Russian policy. Sentiment counts even in Wall Street, and Russia has for years been hoping to offset the exhaustion of France and the reluctance of London and Berlin by tapping the financial markets of America. Here again the "tradition" has been brought into play and worked to its fullest capacity.

So that the marvellous legend has had its visible, still more its invisible, uses. And yet to a detached onlooker there was always a false and hollow ring about the "friendliness" to which it gave birth, always something against the grain of nature in the "sympathy" so loudly trumpeted. Apart from politics, what real affinity could there be between the nation that had raised Western civilization to its highest level and the nation that regards Western civilization as the tottering forerunner of anarchy; between a free republic and a church-supported autocracy; between a people to whom religious liberty, personal liberty, political liberty is as the breath of life and a people dominated by the obscurantism of a mediæval orthodoxy, by the passport system, the censorship and bureaucratic espionage; between a race nourished on individualism

and a race that owes whatever strength it possesses to the intensity of its communistic instincts; between education and illiteracy, progress and the obstinate lethargy of feudalism, Anglo-Saxon honesty and Oriental evasiveness, freedom and a despotism only mitigated, if at all, by venality? Merely to think of Russia and the United States together is to be confronted, as de Tocqueville long ago divined, with an array of immutable contradictions. It could therefore be only a question of time before the shock of some great event would shatter the notion of "sympathy" between such irreconcilable opposites.

The process of American disillusionment began, indeed, with a clash of political interests. The widening scope of America's activity and the swift development of the Far Eastern drama revealed for the first time an antagonism in material aims between Russia and the United States. But, once begun, nothing could prevent that process from spreading beyond the sphere of politics. A general recanvassing of Russo-American relations as a whole, spiritual and ethical as well as political, was bound to follow; and its issue was not hard to foresee. Freed from the bondage of "tradition," no longer willing to accept declarations as facts or smooth professions as realities, Americans awoke with reluctant amazement to a perception of things as they were. Several incidents happened along to hasten the work of emancipation—a small but irritating war of tariffs, the Russian swoop upon Manchuria with its flagrant menace to American trade, Blagovestchenck and the brutality of the Russian troops after the occupation of Peking, Kishineff and the whole question of Russia's treatment of the Jews, and lastly the illuminating tissue of broken pledges, equivocation and shifty deceit woven into recent negotiations and reproduced in the dealings with Mr. Hay. Of all this we see in the present war the culmination and predestined issue, amazing and all but incredible to Russia and not less wonderful to any American who will allow his thoughts to travel back a brief decade. It is not merely that Americans feel the fascination of Japan, applaud her vehement gallantry, and find their Far Eastern policy substantially at one with hers. This, while it would account for the sympathies of the American people being strongly pro-Japanese, would not explain why they are even more strongly anti-Russian. For that we must look deeper, and it will, I think, be found in this fact, that, over and above a political antagonism

deeply rooted in national interests, Americans have developed towards Russia a feeling of moral repulsion.

I question whether Americans are yet fully aware how much solid ground they have for this sentiment. With the bulk of them it is at least as much an instinct as a reasoned conclusion, and perhaps only a few realize how amply it might be substantiated if a verbatim report of the Russian negotiations with the State Department could be given to the world and if the triumphs of Mr. Hay's patient, pertinent and relentless diplomacy over the subtrefuges, casuistry and blandishments of the Russian diplomacy could be set forth in detail. No diplomacy could have shown a higher union of practicality and imagination, or a politer or more deadly insistence on the essentials, than Mr. Hay's; and what he has had to face not only in the way of ultra-Oriental evasions but of offers—such, for instance, as the offer of preferential treatment for American trade in Manchuria—that practically amounted to colossal national bribes, will perhaps never be adequately known. There is a good deal that might be written, and some day, I hope, will be written, on this head; but it would be beyond the scope of this article to enter upon it now. My present purpose is rather to enforce what I take to be the vital lesson that Americans should learn from the record of their relations with Russia—thirty years of enslavement to a myth, a legend, a fantastic invention, taken on trust with uninquiring confidence; thirty years of docile mobility as a pawn in Russia's game against England; thirty years of obstinate blindness to the plainest facts of international politics; thirty years of effusive "sympathy" with the Power of all Powers whose system most flatly denies the ideals that America has made her own. Is this, may I ask, a record with which Americans, as they glance over it, can feel in any way satisfied? A grave responsibility there is no shuffling out of rests upon every politician and every journalist who has helped to perpetuate this amazing "tradition," and thereby contributed his quota to the further engulfment of his country in a morass of unrealities. I know perfectly well what reply it is that Americans make to such criticism. They argue that the truth about Russia's supposed action in the Civil War has always been known and understood at Washington; that the "tradition" has never deluded any one of importance, that it made for harmony between the two countries, and that, in the days of America's isolation, it was not

worth while exposing it. But against this I would urge that, as the foreign policy of the United States must be responsive to public opinion, it is of the first importance that that opinion should be instructed in the facts; that a nation cannot feed on fairy tales without harm to its powers of seeing and thinking clearly; and that as a matter of fact the Russian "tradition" has more than once decisively influenced the relations between the United States and other Powers. Besides this, there is a real peril in the revolution that follows the moment of awakening. It is clear, for instance, that American opinion to-day is running to extremes. The same sort of reaction was visible after the Spanish War in the violent outburst of Teutophobia that swept across the country. Such outbursts are of course destructive of the quiet and comprehensive reflection that can alone enable a nation—as it has enabled the Japanese—to adopt and pursue a settled line of policy. Yet I do not see how they can be prevented unless the influences that do most towards the moulding of opinion—particularly the Press and the leading politicians of the country—recognize the necessity of discussing America's foreign policy more frequently, more temperately, and, above all, as a cohesive whole. For five years during which I lived in the United States I never heard of an American politician, except Senator Beveridge, devoting more than a passing reference to the Far-Eastern question in an address to his constituents. That, obviously, is not as it should be; and there is no moral to be drawn from the record of Russo-American relations more apparent than the need of accustoming the people to examine and debate the foundations of their foreign policy. I hope the time may come when the Secretary of State, the leading members of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, the editors of the great papers and those shrewd and far-seeing business men who have grasped the importance of China to the commercial future of the United States, will more or less unite in giving the country a lead in this vital matter through the agency of public meetings and addresses and the Press. Only so can the nation pursue in the Far East the same unwavering policy it has pursued in South America. Only so can those violent fluctuations of opinion which are the mark of distracted counsels and shifting aims be avoided. Only so can preposterous "traditions" be challenged and exposed and bed-rock realities unveiled.

There is one fundamental point in the Far-Eastern question,

as it affects the United States, which Americans have yet to settle within themselves. The United States stands definitely committed (in Captain Mahan's words) (1) to the open door, and (2) to "the prevention of preponderant political control by any one external state or group of states." American policy, that is, insists upon an equality of commercial privileges and respect for the territorial and administrative integrity of China. I may, perhaps, be permitted to recall the deductions which Captain Mahan drew from the enunciation of this policy. That foremost of living commentators on international politics warned his countrymen that their policy differed from that of other states, that the prosecution of it demanded the application of sea-power, that the valley of the Yangtse was "the central scene of our general interest," and that to exert her proper influence along that penetrating highway the United States must be prepared not only to employ force, if necessary, but to get rid of that "caricature of independence," that supremely elementary fallacy, which rules out the possibility of voluntary cooperation, from time to time, with other Powers, on the ground that it is opposed to, instead of being, as it is, a condition of, her complete freedom of choice and action. "Briefly," said Captain Mahan, and these words strike down to the root of things, "we cannot be sure of the commercial advantages known as the 'open door,' unless we are prepared to do our share in holding it open. We cannot count upon respect for the territory of China unless we are ready to throw, not only our moral influence, but, if necessity arise, our physical weight, into the conflict, to resist an expropriation, the result of which might be to exclude our commerce and neutralize our influence." But it will be said that Mr. Hay has already secured these objects without moving a single ship or a single soldier. Mr. Hay's diplomacy, I heartily admit, has been singularly adroit, pertinacious and so far successful. It has conciliated China, baffled Russia, and amply established the American position. But nothing can be more certain than that diplomacy, to be permanently effective, must rest and can only rest on the implication of force. For a while, despatch-writing and the pressure of "moral influence" may apparently be all that is needed; but the time will assuredly come when the pregnant common sense of the Kaiser's dictum will have to be admitted: "If anything has to be done in this world, the pen will be powerless to carry it through

unless backed by the force of the sword." Now, I do not think that Americans have yet realized this axiom as a hard and constant fact. I do not think that war in defence of American rights in the Far East has yet presented itself as a serious possibility to the national consciousness. "Fortunately for the United States," wrote Mr. Josiah Quincy during the Boxer *émeute* of 1900, "in spite of our large army in the Philippines and our troops now in China, no sane American thinks that we will fight with any other member of the Concert, whatever may be our policy or our interests, either to prevent the dismemberment of China or to secure any share in the partition for ourselves, or to reform the Chinese Government, or even to maintain the open door for our trade." That is a definite and categorical statement. Does it or does it not reflect the sentiments of the United States to-day? Is it true that the open door and the territorial integrity of China represent the wishes, but not the determination, of America; that opinion will support Mr. Hay only so long as he spills ink but no blood? Is American policy in China nothing more than the policy of the French at Fashoda—a policy of bluff, to be abandoned when seriously challenged? Until these questions are answered, until it is known whether America regards her stake in the commercial future of China as sufficiently important to justify, if need be, a war in its defence, it is impossible to say whether such a thing as an American Far-Eastern policy really exists, or, if it exists, whether it is based on rock or on sand. No pen has flowed faster than Mr. Hay's since he first launched his Circular to the Powers in September, 1899; but the Chinese question, I must again insist, is not one of those cases in which the pen is mightier than the sword. Had Mr. Hay all the qualities of a Bismarck—and I believe he has most of them—he would still, in the last resort, be fundamentally helpless without a Moltke in the background. This, then, is pre-eminently the question which Americans have to face, and I would most earnestly press upon them the urgency of revolving it not in the light of what Washington may have said in the eighteenth century, not in the light of any such "tradition" as for a whole generation hypnotized the relations between Russia and the United States, but simply with reference to present-day conditions and the probabilities of the immediate future.

ANGLO-AMERICAN.